



United States Senator  
**Richard Shelby**  
REPORTS TO ALABAMA



### WHAT'S AT STAKE IN IRAQ?

*'Tis the business of little minds to shrink; but he whose heart is firm, and whose conscience approves his conduct, will pursue his principles unto death.*

Thomas Paine,  
"The Crisis," No. 1

Certainly the events that inspired Thomas Paine to write these words were not of equal moment to the events that surround our continuing vexation with Saddam Hussein. They do, however, express a concept similar in nature — national resolve to be free from subjugation and tyranny.

After the demise of the Soviet Union, we have been relatively free from imminent national peril. By any measure, we are unquestionably the sole remaining international superpower. Our economic and military superiority along with our relative geographical isolation should place the balance of power firmly in our favor. But, it does not. Technological advances in weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems have substantially altered our relationships with the nations of the world, most profoundly with smaller and emerging countries. The shift is further exacerbated when these countries sacrifice general economic development in pursuit of weapons technology. Saddam Hussein has repeatedly sacrificed the economic well-being of the Iraqi people to continue developing weapons of mass destruction.

A credible chemical or biological capability is similar to a nuclear capability, in that it has the potential to indiscriminately kill thousands of people, belligerents and civilians alike. Saddam Hussein has the capability and more importantly he has demonstrated that he has the will to use these weapons,

even on his own people. The horror of a chemical or biological attack is unimaginable for the American people. It is not unimaginable, however, that Saddam Hussein could orchestrate the clandestine delivery of a biological weapon directly into the heart of America. The threat, therefore, is real.

The post-Gulf War policy of dual containment has failed. As long as Saddam Hussein maintains his stranglehold on the Iraqi people, the Gulf region will remain unstable and we will go on reacting to the whims of a despot. There is no reason to believe that Saddam will ever comply with the United Nations weapons monitoring regime. A sustained bombing and missile attack will not destroy all of Saddam's weapons manufacturing capabilities nor, without a great deal of fortuity, will it reach Saddam himself. As long as Saddam survives and his Republican Guard remains loyal, the threat remains. Therefore, America must resolve to act and act decisively.

Before a nation can act, however, there must be unity of purpose and the will to succeed. Many Americans do not yet appreciate the gravity and nature of the threat. It is understandably difficult to appreciate the dangers posed by this distant villain in a nation virtually unknown to the American public before the Gulf War.

Further, Americans have become increasingly reluctant to accept the inevitability of U.S. casualties in any military action. The advent of precision guided smart weapons combined with complete aerial supremacy during Operation Desert Storm have unfortunately lead Americans to believe that even large scale military conflicts can be relatively antiseptic with regard to loss of life. Nothing could be farther from the truth. While we must

never be cavalier about the loss of American fighting men and women, we must be realistic. Great deeds often involve great sacrifice.

Decisive action against Saddam Hussein will involve sacrifice. The failure to act, however, could raise the cost beyond our ability or will to pay. For example, prior to the Gulf War, nearly half of the U.S. Senate supported a prohibition on offensive U.S. military operations for a minimum of 18 months. As it turned out, however, international inspectors determined after the war that Iraq would have possessed a nuclear weapons capability in twelve months or less. Instead of a few hundred U.S. casualties, the number could have been several hundreds of thousands. American will and international support, in all likelihood, would have collapsed and we would likely have been forced to respond in kind.

Once again Congress is debating our options in Iraq. As we negotiate the wording of a Concurrent Resolution expressing support for action against Iraq, I am struck by the irony of the process. As we quibble over words and their meaning, punctuation and its import, we slowly dilute the very intent of the document which is to express the resolve of the Congress. Such a document will be meaningless unless it is clear in purpose, free from ambiguity, and devoid of nuance. Now is not the time to shrink from our responsibilities as an international leader. Saddam Hussein is a menace to peace and stability in the world. The United States of America must no longer subjugate itself to the whims of a despot. We have little choice but to remove Saddam Hussein and rid ourselves and the world of his brand of terror by whatever means necessary.



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